

# "WHY CAN'T WE ALL GET ALONG?" UNITY AND DIVISION IN LATINO/A POLITICS

*CES 359/POLSCI 375*

**M/W 1:25 - 2:40 pm**

**Spring 2008**

**Todd Hall 204**

Course website: [www.josealamillo.com](http://www.josealamillo.com)

Washington State University  
Comparative Ethnic Studies 359  
& Political Science 375  
Spring Semester 2008  
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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Chicano/as and Latino/as are often stereotyped as the "sleeping giant" or politically apathetic. On the contrary, despite been historically excluded from "formal" political activities and institutions, Chicano/as and Latino/as have long been politically active, as organizers, participants, and leaders in their respective communities, workplaces, and political organizations. This course provides a broader perspective of the term, "political," (typically reduced to electoral politics) that examines the exercise of power from more institutionalized contexts such as the economy, the state, and political groups to more informal structures of everyday life and culture. We will consider the "politics of ethnicity" as it relates to Chicano/as and Latino/a groups within urban and rural community settings and explore how this diverse Latino/a populations continues to be divided along class, racial, gender, sexual orientation and citizenship lines. These divisions present challenges for existing Chicano/a organizations that emerged out the Chicano/a and Puerto Rican Movements. Finally given the current political environment we will explore whether it is necessary to build a "Latino bloc" a nexus of diverse groups that differ by nationality, race, citizenship status, class, gender, sexuality, and political views.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To develop an understanding of the historical origins and development of Latino/a politics
- To introduce students to the divergent political ideologies of the Latino/a population that is divided by class, race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, language, and citizenship status.
- To examine the role of non-electoral Latino/a politics in shaping public policy and social change

- To evaluate whether Latinos and Latinas can come together as a “bloc” and address pressing political issues of the current moment.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- **Attendance/Participation: (10%)**

Attendance in class is mandatory. Daily attendance will be taken. According to the WSU Student Handbook only institutional excuses will be accepted. If you know in advance you will be missing class for a legitimate reason please contact me to see how you can make up the missing assignments. If you have more than 2 unexcused absences your participation grade will be lowered by one point for every absence thereafter. Your participation is important. I expect you to contribute to class discussions and participate actively in class discussions and activities. In terms of participation it is important that you write down your thoughts and questions to improve the quality of your contribution to discussions. I expect every student to show respect for others' opinions and perspectives and hope to engage each other in a productive dialogue, choosing to agree or disagree when necessary. (10 points)

- **In Class Writing Responses: (10%)**

You will be asked to periodically respond individually or as a group to questions concerning the readings, lecture, films and discussions. These writing responses will be conducted at the beginning of the class taking approximately 5-10 minutes of class time. These responses are to make sure you are keeping up with the readings and comprehending the material in class. These writing assignments will count 10% of the total grade. (10 points)

- **Midterm Exam (25%)**

Each student must complete a midterm exam that covers the first two parts of the course. Students will be responsible for the information in the reading assignments, lectures, class discussions and videos. There will be no substitute work, alternate exam dates, or make-up exams without documented illness or emergency. Each answer must be typed or word processed, double spaced with citations and page numbers of readings, films, and videos (Alamillo, 2007, p. 450). Each answer should range from 2-3 pages. Remember that quality is more important than quantity. Use quotes sparingly, paraphrase, avoid block quotes, and always cite. Please always use specific examples. Midterm Exam will be distributed Wednesday 2/27 and Due Monday 3/3. (25 points)

- **Final Exam (25%)**

There will be a take-home final exam that will cover the material from the last two parts of the course. Students will be responsible for the information in the reading assignments, lectures, class discussions and videos. Each answer should range from 2-3 pages. Remember that quality is more important than quantity. Use quotes sparingly, paraphrase, avoid block quotes, and always cite. Please always use

specific examples. The final will be a take-home exam distributed on the last day of class and will be due during the final examination date. Final Exam will be distributed Wednesday 4/23 and due by Thursday May 1<sup>st</sup> by 5pm. (25 points)

• **Latino/a Politics Web Blog (30%)**

Each student will produce a blog on Latino politics. The purpose of the blog is to connect the course readings and discussions to current political issues affecting the Latino population (i.e. immigration reform) and the impact of Latinos and Latinas on contemporary politics (i.e. the Latino vote). Each student is responsible for posting on their own blog and a classmate's blog at least once a week. In other words each week I expect TWO posts from each student. You can post your reflections on the course readings and discussion and how they related to current news stories. Students may also post newspaper articles, videos, television, or other multi-media that relates to the course. You will need to create your blog by *January 28<sup>th</sup>* and post during that same week. That same day you need send the web address to the instructor. All blog links will be posted on the instructor's course web page. I recommend that you choose the free blog services: <http://www.blogger.com> or <http://wordpress.com/>. I will be checking each blog at the end of each week (Fridays). I will evaluate the quality of each post for their relevance to the topic of Latino politics and engagement with the course readings. Your contributions will be graded according to the following scale:

- simple response to someone else's post (e.g.: "yes, I agree"): 1 point
- detailed response (e.g.: "yes, I agree but.../no I don't agree because + reference to a course text or current event"): 2 points
- new post regarding an issue relevant to the class (e.g. "check out this article on Latino politics in the *Los Angeles Times*): 3 points
- new, detailed post + reference to a course text (e.g. "check out this article; it contradicts Sanchez's Theory of Power because. . ."): 4 points

If you need help creating a blog please see me during office hours or make an appointment. (30 points)

**GRADING**

Class Participation.....	10%
In-Class Writing Assignments.....	10%
Take Home Midterm Exam.....	25%
Take Home Final Exam.....	25%
Latino Politics Blog.....	30%

## **COURSE GRADING SCALE:**

A 96-100%  
A- 90-95%  
B+ 87-89%  
B 83-86%  
B- 80-82%  
C+ 77-79%  
C 73-76%  
C- 70-72%  
D+ 67-69%  
D 63-66%  
D- 60-62%  
F 59-below

## **Special Notes:**

\* The instructor reserves the right to modify and make any changes to the syllabus during the semester.

\*Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication in the process of completing academic work. If caught students will be punished according to university guidelines: WAC 504-25-015

\*Students with Disabilities: I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. Please go to the Disability Resource Center (DRC) during the first two weeks of every semester to seek information or to qualify for accommodations. All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC, located in the Administration Annex Bldg, Room 205. To make an appointment with a disability counselor, please call 335-3417.

## **REQUIRED BOOKS:**

- 1) David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity* (University of California Press, 1995)
- 2) Lisa García Bedolla, *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity and Politics in Los Angeles* (University of California Press, 2005)
- 3) José Ramón Sánchez, *Boricua Power: A Political history of Puerto Ricans in the United States* (New York University Press, 2007)
- 4) Michael Jones-Correa, *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City* (Cornell University Press, 1998)

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

### **PART 1: POLITICS OF ETHNICITY**

Week 1:

Monday 1/7 Introductions:

Wednesday 1/9 Defining Terminology and Concepts  
Gutiérrez's *Walls and Mirrors*, Introduction (1-11)  
Rosaura Sanchez and Beatrice Pita's "Theses on the Latino Bloc: A Critical Perspective" (PDF Download)

Week 2:

Monday 1/14 Gutiérrez's *Walls and Mirrors*, Chapters 1 & 2 (13-68)  
Discussion on Thesis #1 & 2

Wednesday 1/16 Gutiérrez's *Walls and Mirrors*, Chapters 3 (69-116)

Week 3:

Monday 1/21 NO CLASS—MLK Jr. Holiday----

Wednesday 1/23 Gutiérrez's *Walls and Mirrors*, Chapters 4 (117-151)  
Discussion on Thesis #5

Week 4:

Monday 1/28 Gutiérrez's *Walls and Mirrors*, Chapters 5 (152-178)

Wednesday 1/30 Gutiérrez's *Walls and Mirrors*, Chapters 6 &  
Epilogue [179-216]

VIDEO: Fighting for Political Power

## **PART II: LATINO NON-ELECTORAL POLITICS**

Week 5:

Monday 2/4 Bedolla's *Fluid Borders*, Chapter 1 (1-25)

Wednesday 2/6 Bedolla's *Fluid Borders*, Chapter 2 (26-60)  
VIDEO: Power, Politics and Latinos

Week 6:

Monday 2/11 Bedolla's *Fluid Borders*, Chapter 3 (61-99)  
Discussion on Thesis #4

Wednesday 2/13 Bedolla's *Fluid Borders*, Chapter 4 (100-136)  
Discussion on Thesis #3

Week 7:

Monday 2/18 NO CLASS ---President's Day----

Wednesday 2/20 Bedolla's *Fluid Borders*, Chapter 5 (137-174)  
Discussion on Thesis #6

Week 8:

Monday 2/25 Bedolla's *Fluid Borders*, Conclusion (175-192)  
Discussion of Thesis #8

Wednesday 2/27 Big City vs. Small-Town Politics

Robert Dash and Robert Hawkinson "Mexicans and 'Business as Usual': Small Town Politics in Oregon" [PDF Download]

Discussion on Thesis #7

DISTRIBUTE MIDTERM EXAM

## **PART III: LATINO POPULATION ≠ POLITICAL POWER**

Week 9:

Monday 3/3 Sánchez's *Boricua Power*, Introduction and  
Chapter 1 (1-52)

MIDTERM EXAM DUE

Wednesday 3/5 Sánchez's *Boricua Power*, Chapter 2 (53-95)

Week 10:                SPRING BREAK  
Monday 3/10-3/14

Week 11:  
Monday 3/17 Sánchez's *Boricua Power*, Chapter 3 (96-128)  
Wednesday 3/19 Sánchez's *Boricua Power* Chapter 4 (129-170)

Week 12:  
Monday 3/24 Sánchez's *Boricua Power* Chapter 5 (171-252)  
              VIDEO: *Palante, Siempre Palante!: The Young Lords*  
Wednesday 3/26 Sánchez's *Boricua Power* Conclusion (171-252)

**PART IV: LATINO IMMIGRANT POLITICS**

Week 13:  
Monday 3/31 Jones-Correa's *Between Two Nations*,  
Introduction and Chapter 1 (1-34)  
Discussion of Thesis #9  
Wednesday 4/2 Jones-Correa's *Between Two Nations*  
Chapter 2 & 3 (35-65)

Week 14:  
Monday 4/7 Jones-Correa's *Between Two Nations*  
Chapters 4 & 5 (69-106)  
Wednesday 4/9 Jones-Correa's *Between Two Nations*  
Chapters 6 & 7 (109-147)

Week 15:  
Monday 4/14 Jones-Correa's *Between Two Nations*  
Chapter 8 (151-168)  
Wednesday 4/16 Jones-Correa's *Between Two Nations*  
Chapter 9 (169-188)  
Discussion of Thesis #10

Week 16:  
Monday 4/21 Jones-Correa's *Between Two Nations*,  
Chapter 10 (191-202)  
Discussion of Thesis #11  
Wednesday 4/23 Class Review and Course Evaluations  
DISTRIBUTE FINAL EXAM

FINAL EXAM DUE  
Thursday May 1<sup>st</sup> by 5pm

